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Reagan Assails Carter Over Disclosure of Secret Plane

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Special to The New York Times

JACKSONVILLE, Fla., Sept. 4 — Ronald Reagan charged President Carter today with "a cynical misuse of power and a clear abuse of the public trust" in the disclosure of secret research to develop aircraft that can evade radar detection.

Swinging into the President's native South, the Republican Presidential nominee continued a pattern of sharp attacks on his Democratic opponent.

Last night in Washington, Mr. Reagan accused Mr. Carter before the B'nai B'rith of breaking faith with Israel. Today he charged the President with sanctioning a breach of American military secrecy for political gain.

Late this afternoon, news organizations in Washington and New York began receiving inquiries about whether the 69-year-old Mr. Reagan had suffered a heart attack. The rumor surprised the campaign contingent, as Mr. Reagan was in sight almost all day and appeared to be in

good health. Nevertheless, it swept Wall Street, and stock prices fell. [Page D6.]

Counting the Spoons

Speaking before several hundred people here at a luncheon for businessmen's clubs at a Holiday Inn, Mr. Reagan recalled Mr. Carter's 1976 promise: "I'll never lie to you."

"After hearing that line about 20 times I was reminded of Ralph Waldo Emerson's line," Mr. Reagan said, quoting, "The louder he talked of his honor, the faster we counted our spoons."

Mr. Carter has declared that the South's honor was besmirched Monday by Mr. Reagan's jibe that the President had chosen to open his campaign in Tusculum, Ala., which Mr. Reagan mistakenly called the birthplace of the Ku Klux Klan. But here the former California Governor was enthusiastically received at the luncheon and in a speech at a nearby park.

Mr. Reagan charged that Defense Secretary Harold Brown had "breached one of this nation's most closely held military secrets in a transparent effort to divert attention from the Administration's dismal defense record."

Mr. Reagan said that last week Benjamin F. Schemmer, editor of The Armed

Forces Journal, testified before the House Armed Services Subcommittee on Research and Development that he was given information on the technology of the project by the Defense Department.

"What the Defense Department deliberately leaked, in order for Secretary Brown to justify calling his press conference four days later," Mr. Reagan charged, "was some of the most tightly classified, most highly secret weapons information since the Manhattan Project," which developed the first atomic weapons.

In testimony before Armed Forces Committee subcommittees today, Mr. Brown said that he had no evidence that the disclosures came from the Pentagon and that the decision to declassify the project's existence of the project was made to bar further disclosures.

Later, as Mr. Reagan was preparing to leave Jacksonville, he was asked if he thought Mr. Brown ought to be prosecuted for the disclosure.

"I think that may be one of the reasons why the Congress asked him to appear before the committee — to investigate that," Mr. Reagan replied. "But I don't see how he could be. You see, the Secretary of Defense does have the power to declassify classified material."

Mr. Reagan said earlier that "the law provides severe penalties for anyone violating military weapons secrets of this magnitude."